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California Postsecondary Education Commission
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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California State University Long Beach – Montebello Unified School District partnership receives \$945,222 to address achievement gap

SACRAMENTO — December 5, 2008 — California State University, Long Beach, in partnership with Montebello Unified School District, has won funding for a new professional development project to help improve elementary school teaching in the core content area of science. The partnership has been awarded a four-year Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) grant of \$945,222 by the California Postsecondary Education Commission.

The Bell Gardens Science Project will serve all the teachers at Bell Gardens Elementary School. More than 50 teachers will learn science content, science inquiry strategies, and how to integrate English language development into science lessons. This project builds on the university's successful K–2 project in the Montebello district. Teachers will also work to form collaborative teams in their school to help sustain their efforts in future years. The grant is part of the federal ITQ program, funded through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to provide high quality professional development to teachers.

Over the past two decades, the Commission has awarded more than 200 grants totaling \$110 million to improve teacher quality. The 2008 grants, totaling \$5.8 million, address California's achievement gap based on race, ethnicity, or language. The grants improve classroom strategies in core subjects. The grants require rigorous evaluation to demonstrate how professional development affects student achievement.

“While the professional development provided by the grants is vital, the evaluation requirement is especially important,” the Commission's Executive Director Murray J. Haberman said. “Being required to demonstrate the impact of professional development on student success, not just on teacher practice, supports the Commission's commitment to accountability in educational programs.”

Commission Chair Olivia K. Singh said, “The grant plays an important role in making sure every student has the opportunity to learn from a highly qualified teacher. The teachers who participate will learn new techniques to address the needs of students and help them become lifelong learners.”

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More information may be found online at

<http://www.cpec.ca.gov/federalprograms/teacherquality.asp>.

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The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. The Commission's primary focus is to ensure that the state's educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities.